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Cultural Shock of an International Academic: From a Liberal Arts Education in the United States to a Post-1992 University in the UK

Jennifer Chung
St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK

Introduction

My academic journey from the United States of America to the UK began with my studies in the United States and continued with my study and subsequent employment at English universities. Despite the consistency of language used in these two countries, I faced significant professional culture shock, one especially striking between an elite liberal arts institution in the United States and a post-1992, 'modern', or 'new' university in the UK. This chapter documents my journey across the Atlantic, the culture shock, and the subsequent resolution.

Learning, in its purest form, broadens minds with the active pursuit of knowledge. Liberal arts education, a descendant of the modern universities in Europe, upholds the philosophy of traditional learning. Liberal arts institutions support the holistic development of a human being. While rare in its truest form in the UK, Europe, and the rest of the world, this vestige of higher learning for learning's sake still exists in the United States (Chung 2004). Shunning preprofessionalism, these institutions urge students to choose their own curriculum, encourage interdisciplinary thought and critical thinking (ibid.) rather than preparing students for a specific career. Interestingly, many employers in the United States actively seek those with a liberal arts education, even though the potential employees do not regularly pursue study directly related to their future careers (ibid.).

In contrast, most institutions of higher education (HE) do not adhere to this philosophy. In recent years, the connection between education and a country's economy has gathered more importance. For example, a strong economy is often associated with a successful education system; on the other hand, a country with a weak economy could attribute this to a faulty education system (Tobin, Hsueh and Karasawa 2009). Education, therefore, is seen as essential for economic development (e.g. Moutsios, 2009). Politicians and education policymakers increasingly stress the importance of education's connection with a country's economy and a university graduate's immediate contribution to the labour market. Budget constraints in HE have led to favouring career-orientated disciplines over traditional ones, assuming, or fearing, that classical subjects and humanities do not prepare the modern student to best perform as an asset in the labour market. I speculate that high tuition fees in both the UK and in the United States add to this pressure in these two countries.

While all universities need to attract a student body, newer institutions, especially, must compete for students; part of this involves employment prospects after graduation. In the UK, these new institutions are referred to as a 'post-1992 university', 'modern university', or 'new university' (Read, Archer and Leathwood 2003: 263) established under the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, expanding university provision in the UK. Post-1992 universities 'have tended, however, to continue to be regarded as of lower status than the more traditional, older universities' (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003: 613). These post-1992 universities have had to typically carve out their own niche within the HE framework in the UK. The emphasis on employability after HE has more gravitas at post-1992 universities, which contrasts greatly with the ethos behind the liberal arts tradition. While the Act of 1992 immediately awarded former polytechnics in the UK university status, post-1992 universities also include institutions that were not polytechnics, often colleges (in the UK sense) of HE. Both Liverpool Hope University and my current place of employment are post-1992 institutions that were not polytechnics. In this chapter, post-1992 refers to 'new' and 'modern' universities in the UK. As the terms new and modern are relative, post-1992 is used for clarity.

The liberal arts tradition has connections to HE in the Old World, meaning Europe, as well as American culture and values. This chapter gives some background and information about liberal arts education in the United States, the basis of my own undergraduate education, and its stark contrast with my first academic job in the UK at a post-1992 university. I found the notion of 'liberal arts' is often misinterpreted or misunderstood outside the United

States. As stated previously, I experienced a significant culture shock from attending an elite liberal arts institution in the United States to working at a post-1992 university in the UK. To add to this contrast and culture shock, my postgraduate education in the UK, and first experience of HE in the UK, was based at Oxford University. My first employment opportunity as an academic made me realize that the Oxbridge culture, that of the two elite institutions of HE in the UK, Oxford and Cambridge universities, is not indicative of UK tertiary education in general. Perhaps some of the culture shock originated not only from the differences of HE between the United States and the UK, but also between elite HE institutions and one that was just beginning its journey as a full establishment of HE.

In this chapter I discuss first the two settings which provide the basis of this culture shock, American and English HE, with some background on the liberal arts tradition. Next, the chapter delves into three areas of my culture shock, curriculum, assessment, and external evaluation, as these were areas of the most significant and startling difference in my experience in the United States and in the UK. Finally, the chapter concludes with my resolution of these differences among HE institutions on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Comparison of setting

In order to provide a more meaningful contrast between the elite liberal arts college in the United States and the post-1992 university in the UK, this section provides some background on these two institutions.

Amherst College, founded in 1821, has a tiny student enrolment of 1,600 students, and is located in western Massachusetts. The college hopes to provide its students with an excellent education in a personal atmosphere. The college believes:

> Our purpose, after all, is not to fill your mind with a lifetime supply of knowledge – an impossible undertaking – but to lead you to analyze evidence for yourself … According to a tradition as old as Socrates, these goals are best achieved through conversations – direct interchanges with experienced teachers skilled at asking challenging questions. Education in this tradition – the liberal arts tradition – is necessarily a personal, face-to-face experience, not a mass-produced one, (*Amherst* 2003:12).

The Open Curriculum marks another of Amherst's unique characteristics. Students, with the help of their advisors, choose their own course of academic

action, therefore ensuring that each student takes a course due to personal interest, not need. Amherst has one requirement, the First-Year Seminar, designed to help first-year students transition into 'an academic environment that emphasizes discussion, writing, and research' (*Amherst* 2003: 15). Amherst impressively admits fewer than 14 per cent of its applicants. The viewbook states, 'Every year, *U.S. News & World Report* ranks Amherst as one of the best colleges [undergraduate institutions] in the country' (ibid.; 55). Amherst College, through its commitment to teaching and learning, has produced many distinguished alumni. Amherst also enjoys an excellent reputation in the United States and internationally for its academic excellence.

Liverpool Hope University is located in the North West of England. It is the only ecumenical university in Europe. Two colleges for women, St Katharine's and Notre Dame, both established in the nineteenth century, merged with Christ's College, a Catholic, coeducational teacher training college. In 1980, they formed an institute of HE. In 1995, following the 1992 Education Act, the institution became Liverpool Hope, able to grant degrees through a partnership with the University of Liverpool. Liverpool Hope was granted full university status in 2005. It aims to educate well-rounded individuals, developing the whole person in mind, body and spirit, regardless of faith, age, social or ethnic background. The Christian ethos underpins the university's mission in developing a community contributing to academic, religious and social harmony. In particular, the university aims, through inclusion and wider participation, to reach out to those who may miss out on HE opportunities.

American higher education vs English higher education

HE in the United States is in a constant state of evolution (Barzun 1969: 6) and has developed into an extremely complex and diverse system. The pluralistic nature of HE in the United States differentiates it from the rest of the world (Boyer 1987: 125). The American system, unlike those of other countries, never fell under central control: understandably, 'the country in its youth was fearful of centralization in any form and the national university was never created' (DeVane 1965: 121). This decentralization has proved a positive aspect of American HE, providing opportunities for all types of students and different styles of education. Even today, approximately 65 per cent of US students attend HE institutions, while fewer than 50 per cent of UK youth enrol in university.

The fabric of American culture, society and economy encourages market values, even within the system of education. The decentralization and diversity of HE in the United States add to this, and creates competition between institutions. Bok (1986) feels that this decentralization and competition leads to the success of HE in the United States compared to other countries, and the aforementioned higher rate of participation in tertiary education in the United States versus the UK is an example of this. Thus, American colleges and universities, much like their UK counterparts, compete with each other on all levels (Bok 1986: 14). To feed this competition, the American and international public pay close attention to university rankings. Most of these rankings stem from the now-infamous magazine, *U.S. News & World Report:* '[T]he annual reports on "America's Best Colleges", published by *U.S. News & World Report* popularized the pecking order and gave it third party validity in the public mind' (Breneman 1993: 93).

Although this competition proves beneficial for the most selective places, not all institutions benefit from this competitive system. 'Faced with mounting competition for a dwindling student population, many colleges [undergraduate institutions] appear to have responded by relaxing academic standards, adding vocational majors, and requiring fewer liberal arts courses' (Bok 1986: 39). These less selective colleges have compromised academic rigour in order to attract students. It can be argued that the aforementioned competition for students in the HE sector in the UK has brought about the same compromising of academic rigour. Bok's arguments also ring true with the creation of post-1992 universities in the UK. While this competition for the brightest student body proves beneficial for an institution like Amherst, a place like Liverpool Hope faces a harder task of recruiting a student body. An established, elite institution of HE engenders an established, elite student body; however, a newer institution of HE must foster both a student body and institutional reputation. Bok's assertions imply that this is true of institutions in the United States and across the Atlantic in the UK, and around the world. This has repercussions in terms of the type of curriculum offered to the students at the two institutions, one purely liberal arts versus another aimed at pre-professionalism. This competition and compromising of academic rigour added to my culture shock, discussed later in the chapter.

Few would contest that universities in the United States, especially the elite institutions, have proved themselves a world educational power. Interestingly, Lucas credits England with influencing American colonial education. 'The course of study offered by the typical colonial college very much reflected the earliest settlers' resolve to effect a *translatio studii* – a direct transfer of higher learning from ancient seats of learning at Queen's College in Oxford

and Emmanuel College in Cambridge to the frontier outposts of American wilderness' (1994: 109). English universities found their niche in their influence in the New World. 'The English ... are excessively conscientious teachers: "It is our first business to teach," one hears again and again' (Flexner 1930: 254). This history of English influence and commitment to teaching, especially from Oxbridge colleges, has interesting implications in both the ethos of Amherst College and my expectations of becoming a lecturer in the UK.

My experience both at Amherst and at Oxford shaped the expectations of my first lectureship position. While all of my professors at both institutions were prominent academics, their commitment to teaching and learning was palpable. I began my lectureship at Liverpool Hope with the same commitment to teaching and learning. However, while I had a heavy teaching load at Liverpool Hope, the underlying message was to publish. This 'publish or perish' attitude superseded, at least implicitly, the quality of my teaching. While not unique to the UK or Liverpool Hope, this attitude contrasted with the teaching and learning ethos of a liberal arts college. Again, although my professors at Amherst were often world-renowned researchers, it was their 'first business to teach' (ibid.). This 'publish or perish' attitude at Liverpool Hope added to my culture shock, especially in terms of external evaluation of universities and research in the UK, discussed later in this chapter.

Today's American liberal arts institutions, interestingly, closely resemble the traditional UK education model in terms of honouring learning for its own sake versus preparation for the labour market: 'Oxford and Cambridge have been important agencies in maintaining sanity at a time when vocationalism and practicality endanger all sound educational conceptions' (Flexner 1930: 228). This quote, from 1930, has interesting implications when viewing the variety of institutions, from Oxbridge on the one side and the newer universities on the other, and the 'endangering' of HE from 'vocationalism and practicality'. This impacts upon this chapter's juxtaposition of an elite US liberal arts institution with a post-1992 university in the UK. While we see the connection between English universities, namely, Oxford and Cambridge universities, and their American counterparts, even American scholars (e.g. Bok 1986: 17) note the difference between the Oxbridge institutions and 'newer' institutions within the UK. As an alumna of Oxford as well as an alumna of Amherst, this added to the culture shock experienced while working at Liverpool Hope.

Flexner (1930: 28), like many other authors, warns against the presence of vocational training 'distracting' from the purpose of university, for '[t]he result ... has been large numbers of graduates who are *highly trained but badly educated*'

(Seay 1990: 31, emphasis mine). Training for a career, in other words, does not necessarily educate properly. 'If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society' (Newman, in Tristam 1952: 104). This statement mentions nothing of the acquisition of knowledge. While these sentiments were expressed some time ago, they still ring true today. The debate between learning for learning's sake and preparation for the labour market along with its place in university education remains an area of much discussion. The original intentions, therefore, of higher learning have become skewed over time. The contrast between an established, elite liberal arts institution in the United States and a post-1992 university in the UK further highlights the tensions between the original intention of a university and its response to the labour market and employability for students. The similarities and differences between American and English HE in terms of competition, student recruitment, teaching versus research, and pre-professionalism versus the liberal arts all led to a significant academic culture shock. This chapter now discusses this in terms of curriculum, assessment, and external evaluation.

Culture shock

The aforementioned differences between the United States and the UK, as well as the disparity between elite institutions and a newly established one, led to the culture shock within my academic journey. This chapter now discusses this culture shock, or pedagogical shock, in terms of undergraduate curriculum, approach to assessment, and external evaluation in UK universities.

Curriculum

The approach to undergraduate curricula differs in the United States and in the UK. For example, and as stated previously, Amherst College adheres to the Open Curriculum, entrusting the students to choose their own course of study. After two years of a four-year university journey, a student declares a 'major', meaning main course of study. Amherst College students, as well as most US liberal arts students, are encouraged to experience a wide range of different disciplines, in order to broaden their horizons. Amherst also does not require students to have any distribution requirements or core course requirements outside their chosen major to graduate. Its philosophy remains one of entrusting the students with

the ability to choose their own academic pathways. However, at Liverpool Hope University, at the time when I taught at the institution, students chose to study certain subjects, for example, education studies and early childhood studies, and did not have much choice in their coursework, and especially not in the first year. The lack of choice given to the students, even as undergraduate students, contrasted heavily with my own belief system moulded by my experience at Amherst. However, prior to my employment at Liverpool Hope, the institution had a much more modular and choice-led curriculum. The change to a more prescriptive curriculum coincided with an increase in entry requirements with the intention to offer students a solid grounding within their discipline.

The attitude towards curriculum is a striking contrast between the two institutions. While Amherst's Open Curriculum is the exception to the rule and not the norm for US liberal arts institutions, this added to my culture shock when transitioning between establishments. The debate over university curricula has and probably will always remain a central point of discussion, both within and outside university walls. Some argue that undergraduate students should have free rein over their choice of course work; others feel that the university should have tight control over students' curricula. For example, Bok describes the debate as such: 'while the soundest course undoubtedly lies some distance from either a wholly prescribed or a wholly elective system, it is doubtful that further debate beyond this point will ever produce a decisive outcome' (1986: 40). Nobody has settled this debate. Some could argue, while the Open Curriculum allows for more depth in their subject area, it also limits the scope of students' learning. On the other hand, a prescribed university course could give the student depth in a subject area, but can also limit interdisciplinary learning and critical thinking.

The elective system, meaning student choice of their own coursework, at one end of the spectrum, has both supporters and opponents. With the elective system 'the excellent students in the better colleges could be counted on to get a great deal out of their college years. But the indifferent and poor students who were in the vast majority took the easy and elementary course, the popular lectures, and the convenient hours' (DeVane 1965: 23). DeVane's assertions support my observations that the striking difference between Amherst's Open Curriculum and Liverpool Hope's prescribed undergraduate course reflects the quality of student. The aforementioned differences between the two reflect the students from differing ability and achievement levels taken in by these two institutions. While US institutions have embraced an elective system of curriculum, and the UK a more focused course of study, DeVane's arguments from 1965 still hold

validity in terms of the two very different institutions and approaches to HE discussed in this chapter.

Therefore, the type of student body reflects the approach to curriculum taken by Amherst College and Liverpool Hope University. While initially a shock to me, upon reflection, and juxtaposing my thoughts with those of DeVane (1965), I think a more prescribed curriculum was more appropriate for Liverpool Hope University as an institution and for the student body it had at the time. Different institutions necessitate different approaches to undergraduate curriculum. For example, in 1945, 'the Harvard Redbook stopped short of specifying what might furnish an optimal framework for unifying undergraduate learning. It cautioned against assuming any single pattern was workable for all colleges and universities' (Lucas 1994: 250). This report simply encourages the diverse system of HE to tailor their curricula to their target student body. While DeVane's (1965) aforementioned argument would complement the differences outlined in this chapter between Amherst College, an elite liberal arts institution in the United States, and Liverpool Hope University, a post-1992 university in the UK, most establishments of HE around the world follow a narrower course of study at the undergraduate level. Furthermore, as this chapter later discusses, this also stems from the trust, or lack thereof, within the education systems of the two countries.

Assessment

Another element adding to this culture shock was the difference between the assessments undertaken by the students at Amherst College and Liverpool Hope University. Instead of being constantly assessed throughout each academic term, as was my experience in the United States, there was a higher-stakes assessment at the end of each term. This led to a 'putting all your eggs in one basket' situation. Here, I argue that assessments in UK universities reflect the wider attitudes towards student evaluation in this country, for '[i]f we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must look into its assessment procedures' (Rowntree 1977: 1).

The UK, and more specifically, England, I argue, based both from my research and my own experience, appears to have developed an unhealthy over-reliance on assessment. This stems from the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM). GERM has introduced competition, standardization and accountability to the vernacular of education policy-making and reform (Sahlberg 2011). The 1988 Education Act in England began this worldwide trend of accountability through

policy diffusion (Jakobi 2009). This led to GERM-related measures such as high-stakes testing, accountability, inspections and league tables. This has diffused through all levels of education, including HE. Therefore, assessments even at the HE level have this sense of high-stakes accountability as a result of GERM and the testing culture it created. '[S]tudents are strategic and define the curriculum by what is assessed rather than by what is taught ... if universities are driven down the path of just pleasing the student, through market forces, league tables and an increasingly competitive global market, then the concept of quality learning is under serious threat' (Norton 2007: 92). I felt that the wider, holistic teaching of our subjects was compromised by these assessments and led to a teach-to-the-test approach to each module. A byproduct of this was the amount of support with assessments we were expected to give the students. This contrasted heavily with my own ethos and philosophy of HE, influenced by the liberal arts tradition, which is to instil independence, self-reliance, and critical thinking in the students. I resisted the pressure to give extensive guidance to the students.

Unfortunately, my own resistance to this extensive guidance on assessments was a small battle in a much larger, systemic issue. Students, teachers and lecturers all must succumb to the 'system': 'The systemic model of learning argues instead that what students learn and how teachers teach is part of a system, which is itself constrained by the subject discipline, the institution and ultimately the government agenda. The point about a system is that if you change one part of it, everything must change, otherwise it will not work' (Norton 2007: 93). While some of my colleagues produced sheet after sheet of written guidance, I held to my values and refused to do so. Students informed me that some of their lecturers provided all the headings and subheadings needed for each essay. Still, I did not do this. The students were so appalled by my 'lack of support' that they lodged a complaint against me. Therefore, according to the systemic approach, I argue, and also based on Norton (2007), problems in assessment are part of the system, in this case, the English education system. The wider testing culture has created an undesirable 'teaching to the test' ethos throughout the education system, even at the tertiary level. It is an ongoing battle, as students will always ask for guidance, and the aforementioned GERM culture only contributes to this.

External evaluation

External evaluation on the micro and macro levels of HE in the UK also contributed to the culture shock I experienced in my first academic position. On

the micro level was the second marking/moderation of assignments in addition to the external examining of all assessments and university programmes of study. On the macro level was the evaluation of university research outputs, first with the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which eventually became the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

The second marking and moderation of a sample of assignments, as well as external examining of university programmes, was completely foreign to me. None of my assessments as an undergraduate had any second marking or external moderation. While this stems from a desire to guarantee quality assurance, this to me indicated a lack of trust. My doctoral research (Chung 2009) and the research of others (e.g. Sahlberg 2011) has uncovered that a culture of trust is beneficial to education systems and crucial to avoiding GERM.

Another significant aspect that signified my time at Liverpool Hope University was the frantic preparation for the then-upcoming REF in 2014. The RAE, which eventually became the REF, measures and evaluates research across HE institutions in the UK (e.g. Henkel 1999: 105). This evaluation aims to 'sustain academic values' and determines research funding allocation to various UK universities (ibid.). However, this has had negative repercussions as well, as the RAE has been criticized as 'a profound disturbance' and a 'vehicle of professional and personal humiliation' (ibid.: 106). This evaluation added 'accountability' into research and publications from university lecturers and researchers, and led to the 'stratification of universities … into research … teaching … and mixed institutions' (ibid.: 107). This again adds to and exacerbates the external evaluation so rampant in the UK education system, and HE system, arguably related to GERM (Sahlberg 2011).

When I arrived, Liverpool Hope was in the midst of a strong effort to instil a research culture throughout the university. The faculty, including myself, felt very pressured to produce top-class research. As a 'new' university, this rather immediate change in university research culture compelled the faculty, who at the time already had high teaching loads, to undertake an even more pressurized workload with high research and publication expectations. Liverpool Hope had been awarded the research degree awarding powers in 2009 and therefore the strategic vision was to do better in the REF. The RAE and REF, seen by many as another university league table, embodies the education culture in the UK, also reflecting GERM (Sahlberg 2011) culture, the so-called naming and shaming of universities producing high-quality research and those who were not doing so. Furthermore, research funding from the government is dependent on the RAE/REF results. Instead of producing research for my own

ambitions, I felt extremely pressured to do so for the university. This 'negative external evaluation' (Phillips and Ochs 2004: 778) served as an impetus to create a research culture. Interestingly, 'post-1992 universities felt they must quickly establish the foundation of a research culture, if they were to have any chance of making research a substantial component of their work' (Henkel 1999: 112). This rang true during my experience at Liverpool Hope, especially since 'post-1992 universities were originally established as teaching institutions with almost no research allocations' (Parker 2008: 246). Unfortunately, paralleling Parker's (2008) assertions, this meant that research at Liverpool Hope was essentially prioritized over teaching and, with post-1992 institutions morphing into research-orientated, pre-1992 universities, this 'damaged the status of teaching' (ibid.: 248) at these institutions.

This tension between research and teaching also exists in the HE culture in the United States. However, a difference exists between research universities and teaching, liberal arts colleges. Although very diverse, we can classify two main groups in American HE, the institutions directed towards research and those intending to teach. Boyer admitted that the research university overpowers the liberal arts college: 'Small liberal arts colleges may have a culture of their own. Faculty may teach more and spend more time with students. But even these institutions live in the shadow of the research university' (1987: 121–122). Unfortunately, the power of research eclipses the virtues of teaching (Breneman 1993: 87). There are those, however, who do not see the merits of research universities. 'Successful research institutes are no substitute for universities' (Flexner 1930: 35). In other words, places of research do not equal a university. Higher learning must have teaching as well. The difference between the United States and the UK in terms of external evaluation is that the external evaluation through the RAE and the REF has morphed primarily teaching institutions into research institutions.

The tension between teaching and educating undergraduate students and producing top-class research is by no means isolated to my experience at Liverpool Hope University or only within institutions in the UK. University lecturing has taken on this dual nature, that of a teacher/educator and researcher. This tension makes it difficult for anyone in such a role to excel in either field. Heavy teaching loads, large student numbers, marking, tutorials, and pastoral care distract from the research element of a university lectureship. At the very least, I have learned to balance this better at my current job. We have very clear research days and I use these days to work on my research. While teaching, which I find very enjoyable, remains the focus of my job, I do find time to

research and publish. Nevertheless, this struggle will stay with me, along with university lecturers worldwide, for the rest of my career.

Resolution and conclusion

Upon reflection, the two years I spent at Liverpool Hope University were eye-opening in terms of the differences to my own undergraduate experience at Amherst College. It made me realize that elite, highly selective HE, especially at a liberal arts institution in the United States differed greatly to tertiary education elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, my experience as a postgraduate within the UK at Oxford University probably exacerbated this culture shock. The culture shock included the relative rigidity of undergraduate curriculum. While most of the world's HE institutions adhere to this model, my own experience at a liberal arts institution with an open curriculum differed greatly from that of my students at post-1992 institutions in the UK. While I now understand that the Liverpool Hope approach was appropriate for the specific student body, I had felt that this reflected a lack of trust in the students' choices, and thought they could use some more breadth in their curriculum. Another element adding to this shock was the attitude towards assessment. I argue that the general attitude towards assessment in the UK stems from the 1988 Education Act and the spreading of accountability, high-stakes testing and standardization. These values have spread throughout the world through GERM, and at all levels of education, including HE in the UK. The higher-stakes testing culture led my peers, fellow lecturers, to provide high levels of guidance for student assessment. While not representative of all of my colleagues and of all universities in the UK, I felt that this detracted from the purpose of HE, to establish independent, critical thinkers and problem solvers.

The culture of external evaluation also came as a surprise. The RAE and the REF have arguably caused an identity change in post-1992 universities, shifting quickly from teaching institutions to those undertaking research as well. The league table format of university rankings and external evaluation through the RAE and the REF added to this shift. However, the REF push-to-publish does not differ dramatically from institution to institution in the UK. The REF, I have come to accept, is part and parcel of an academic career in the UK, whether at a Russell Group institution or at a post-1992 university.

The original idea of a university and the philosophy behind liberal arts education is a dying 'art'. A handful of institutions in the United States and the

UK have maintained these values; however, many, especially those competing for students and newer establishments, have turned towards a pre-professional approach. Employers, ironically, seek graduates of liberal arts institutions, a vestige of learning for learning's sake, for their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The contrast between an elite liberal arts institution in the United States and a post-1992 university in the UK led to many personal conflicts, as outlined in this book chapter. Although I have moved on to a different institution, the resulting learning curve and subsequent resolution of the problems discussed have been invaluable. I now realize that some of the features were not unique to my first job as an academic in the UK; however, some are a consequence of different approaches to HE in different locales.

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